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Reagan's Foreign Affairs Adviser a Pro on Policy, Trade

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When Datsun chief Takashi Ishihara came to the United States two years ago to explore investment opportunities for the giant auto firm, the man who took him around Capitol Hill to meet such notables as Senate Republican Leader Howard H. Baker Jr. (Tenn.) and House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill (D-Mass.) was Richard V. Allen, a business consultant to Datsun.

That visit, commemorated in a photo of Allen, Baker, Ishihara and other smiling Datsun officials, underscores an important point about Allen, the 44-year-old former Nixon administration official who is the key foreign-affairs adviser to Ronald Reagan and a prime possibility to become the president's national security affairs adviser in a Reagan administration.

In recent administrations, security affairs advisers and secretaries of state have tended to be scholars of high reputation like Henry A. Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski or skilled negotiators like superlawyers Cyrus R. Vance and William Rogers.

Allen, however, has a different background. He began as an academic, wrote or edited (sometimes with others) five books on communism (none in the last 10 years). He worked on strategic problems at the Hoover Institution and the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies. He served at the National Security Council and then as a key White House aide on trade matters during two separate stints in the Nixon administration.

But his reputation as a scholar doesn't begin to match that of Kissinger or Brzezinski, and he never received a Ph.D.

In between his White House jobs and for the past eight years, he's moved out of the scholarly world to a much different one: that of the international business consultant, crisscrossing Atlantic and Pacific to consult with Japanese or Portuguese clients, to look into business opportunities in Taiwan, to explore investment policies in Angola and Mozambique. His firm's name here is Potomac International Corp.

In Washington, where the daily bread of politics is rumor, unsubstantiated stories have clustered about Allen.

In the interests of clarification, Allen in an interview commented on a number of such rumors. He denied each one as "preposterous," "a lie" or "categorically untrue" and gave these specific responses:

- "No, I did not" encourage and "absolutely did not" indicate that Nixon approved "covert signals to the South Vietnamese to go slow in 1968 peace negotiations, lest a peace agreement help the Democrats beat candidate Nixon in the presidential election."

- "I do not work for the CIA—period! Never."

- He hasn't any special link to Taiwan, but he has explored business possibilities there and visited there.

- A story that he was somehow involved when Israelis made off with five French gunboats on Christmas Day 1969 is "preposterous."

- In the Nixon White House, he was asked to head up a unit that later became known as "the Plumbers." But at the time the job involved nothing more than declassification of historical documents, the unit wasn't called the Plumbers, he turned down the job, and he wasn't involved in any way in its later activities.

EXCERPTED
